

Hollywood Film Studio Unveils Powerful Effort to Impact 1 Million Veterans, First Responders

The team behind a new biopic about legendary actor Jimmy Stewart has announced a powerful initiative to provide tickets to the film to one million military veterans and first responders.

As CBN News previously reported, the “Jimmy” film, which hits theaters nationwide Nov. 6, tells the backstory behind the “It’s a Wonderful Life” star’s real-life military service.

“The inspiring film will share the untold story of Stewart’s military service in World War II,” a press release reads. “As a thank you to those who serve and the loved ones who support them, Burns & Co. hopes, through corporate, charitable, and community donations, to provide one million donated tickets through Vet Tix for active duty military members, veterans, first responders, and their families to see ‘Jimmy’ in theaters.”

The kind effort to give back to veterans and first responders is being funded by Hien Papaian, founder of the Papaian Studios, a new media company “committed to developing and supporting projects that illuminate faith, inspire hope, and positively influence culture.”

Papaian, who also executive-produced “Jimmy,” founded the veteran effort in honor of her husband, Haig Papaian, Jr., who died in 2024. She provided the first 10,000 tickets for the campaign.

"The moment I finished reading the script for 'Jimmy,' I knew it was a story Papaian Studios had to support," she said in a statement. "Beyond the Hollywood glamour and the trials of war, what resonated most was its message of kindness – something our world desperately needs right now. 'Jimmy' reminds us to look beyond our own struggles, to embrace the suffering of others, and to choose grace."

She continued, "That belief is the foundation of Papaian Studios and a reflection of my husband's legacy, whose kindness was truly infectious."

As previously reported, Stewart is known for an illustrious Hollywood career and for bringing beloved character George Bailey to life in the seminal classic, "It's a Wonderful Life."

Actor KJ Apa will portray Stewart in "Jimmy," which is being produced and directed by Aaron Burns (Burns & Co. Productions).

"[The film] beautifully captures James Stewart's transformative years in the 1940s," a press release reads. "From Hollywood's award-winning leading man (and most eligible bachelor) to enlisting in the U.S. Army Air Corps. From World War II commanding officer to love-struck GI. From war hero to a broken man, Jimmy Stewart came home lost. Until It's A Wonderful Life found him."

With that in mind, the movie will offer a powerful lens into Stewart's personal story of heroism, faith, and navigating Hollywood.

Others cast in the project include "Seinfeld" star Jason Alexander (Louis B. Mayer), "The Sopranos" actor Max Casella (Frank Capra), "Grey's Anatomy" alum Sarah Drew (Hedda Hopper), and "Days of Our Lives" performer Jen Lilley (Gloria

Stewart).

Burns told CBN News in a 2024 interview about his motivation for bringing the project to fruition.

He said he, like so many other Americans, has long known Stewart as an actor, but his perspective was widened a few years ago when he stumbled upon an article detailing the performer's back story – a decision to fight in World War II that took Stewart out of Hollywood and onto the battlefield.

"The storyteller in me just was so intrigued by this," he said.

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